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ENGLISH CONSPIRACY AND DISSENT, 1660-1674, II.

WITH the outbreak of hostilities between England and Holland in the spring of 1664 the hopes of the revolutionary party opposed to the English government, so rudely dashed by the collapse of their plot of the preceding year, began to revive. Even those shrewd and experienced exiles whose lack of faith in miracles had kept them from any active share in the previous designs against Charles and his ministers, now began to take an interest in the possibility of overthrowing their rivals in England by means of foreign interference or aid.¹ The summer of 1664 which was spent by England and Holland in warlike preparations was a time of earnest negotiation between the conspirators, the exiles and the Dutch.² In Holland the disaffected English saw what they had previously lacked, a source of money, arms and supplies, a base of operations, and a possible ally. In them the Dutch saw a rich recruiting ground and a possible means of diversion within England itself. Many English soldiers and sailors driven by poverty or persecution had taken service in Holland.³ The prospect of war drew many more to that country. Ludlow was approached with the offer of a commission, and two of his companions, Colonels Say and Biscoe, went to Holland to enter Dutch service. Thither came Algernon Sidney, and it was presently said that 160 old officers were gathered there, many of them in Dutch pay.⁴ Meanwhile the English revolutionaries, despite their recent reverses, were equally active at home. Those who had escaped were reported mad for revenge, and plotting to that end.⁵

The administration, meanwhile, in the face of these activities, had taken steps to protect itself on the assembling of Parliament. A commission was appointed to look after the fortifications of the Tower, and disbanded officers and soldiers ordered by proclamation

¹ Clarendon, *Life, Continuation*, par. 524 ff.; Ludlow, *Memoirs*, ed. Firth, II. 341, etc.; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1663-1664, pp. 562, 566; cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 279, 426, 434, 610, 615, etc.; *id.*, 1664-1665, pp. 6-89 *passim*.

² *Somers Tracts*, VIII. 439 ff.; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664-1665, p. 191.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 140; Ludlow, II. 381-389.

⁴ Ludlow, and *Somers Tracts*, *ut supra*; Ludlow, II. 345.

⁵ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1663-1664, pp. 554-597 *passim*. Williams, *History of English Journalism*, p. 186, note, declares there was an "organized campaign of seditious journalism", for participation in which a printer, John Twyn, was hanged in this year.

to absent themselves from London and Westminster from March 30 to September 30, and meanwhile not to carry any weapons.⁶ Among various causes of uneasiness, 'prentice riots in London, the machinations of one Evan Price in the north, and rumors of plots everywhere,⁷ the administration was at once relieved and alarmed to discover what they had long suspected, that contributions were systematically collected to aid the agitators. One John Knowles of Pershore, it appeared, had for some years handled the funds thus collected for the "Protestants of Piedmont" and the "Polonian exiles", to be used, it was believed, for the relief of those opposed to the government, at home as well as abroad.⁸ Examinations were continued probing the recent plot, and at least one of its contrivers was released in hope of gaining more evidence.⁹ Among the more interesting developments it was found that arms had been brought into England under guise of use by the Royal African Company, which threw some light on the obscure incident of the two Whites, who were connected with it.¹⁰ The Dutch were said to be encouraging the rising resistance to the Conventicle Act by distributing the heads of that measure in England under title of "An Act for suppressing the worship of God", and while the more moderate sects had determined to keep within its provisions and increase their numbers quietly, the more desperate planned to rise with Dutch aid.¹¹ One of the leaders of the late plot, Mason, escaped from York Castle, and no further information being obtainable from its chief promoter, Atkinson, he was duly hanged.¹² This summer of 1664 was not without more exciting incidents. The discovery of a "desperado plot" to seize the Tower and Whitehall led to arrests which checked the design.¹³ The enforcement of the Conventicle Act revealed the great strength of the sectaries in London,¹⁴ and at York, at Exeter, at Barnstaple and Plymouth it was considered necessary to keep forces on foot against sedition.¹⁵ Finally, in August, that devoted servant of the administration, Major Riordan, wrote that he had been so far successful in his patriotic designs against the

⁶ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1663-1664, pp. 520, 530; Pepys, *Diary*, *passim*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, *ut supra*; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1663-1664, pp. 519, 545.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 258-678 *passim*; *id.*, 1664-1665, pp. 39, 80, 99.

⁹ *Id.*, 1663-1664, pp. 556-664 *passim*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 586.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 587, 621, also *passim*, pp. 606-650.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 635, 638, 664, 676; *id.*, 1664, p. 5.

¹³ *Id.*, 1663-1664, p. 671; *id.*, 1664, pp. 6-35 *passim*; *cf.* also, for other measures, *ibid.*, pp. 615-667 *passim*.

¹⁴ *Id.*, 1663-1664, pp. 71, 603-678 *passim*; *id.*, 1664, pp. 44-82 *passim*.

¹⁵ *Id.*, 1663-1664, p. 654; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XV. 7, p. 97.

refugees in Switzerland as to have compassed the assassination of the ex-chancellor, Lisle.¹⁶

The meeting of Parliament in November was preceded by royal orders to the Mayor and Aldermen of London to search in person every Sunday for conventicles. This was accompanied by the usual proclamation against old officers and soldiers remaining in the City.¹⁷ The main concern of the session was the impending war which was formally declared in February, 1665. It was not begun without a last attempt to conciliate the Dissenters. Anglesey and Ashley presented to the Lords a proposal to sell indulgence in the form of licenses to Nonconformists. But the joint opposition of Clarendon, the Duke of York, and the bishops, with their respective followers, was too great and to the King's chagrin the proposition was defeated. In his closing speech he confined his remarks to the bills offered, but warned the members against the republicans and the Dutch.¹⁸

That warning, at least, was sincere and better founded than perhaps even the King or his ministers knew. For at this very time Say was writing Ludlow that there was certain to be a rising in England in connection with a Dutch attack, and that 30,000 men, a third of whom were land soldiers under old officers, with a fleet and money were at their service to restore the Commonwealth.¹⁹ That English troops and especially officers were being enlisted by the Dutch was beyond question. It was further reported that there were definite designs for a combined rising of the sectaries and a Dutch attack, involving the seizure of Bristol, a Dutch descent on the east coast, and the release of Lambert, but that this would not take place before the Dutch put to sea in May.²⁰ De Witt was indeed slow to yield to the pleadings of Sidney and his friends for the encouragement of insurrection. His own position was too vulnerable, and he had no desire to alienate the English government more than was absolutely necessary.²¹ None the less the design proceeded. A Frenchman, Marchant, was seized and sent to the Tower under strong suspicion of plotting Lambert's release, and additional measures were taken to secure that dangerous prisoner.²² A design of the "desperadoes", Blood, Lockyer, Jones, Wise, Carew

¹⁶ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, August, 1663-1664; also Ludlow, as above.

¹⁷ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664-1665, pp. 7, 79.

¹⁸ *Secret History*, pp. 127 ff.; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 583-595; *Parliamentary History*, IV. 296-317.

¹⁹ Ludlow, II. 376 ff.

²⁰ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664, pp. 140, 207, 216, for the plan, pp. 126-191 *passim*, also pp. 197-219; cf. also pp. 234-235, and Burnet, I. 414 (ed. 1833).

²¹ Burnet as above; *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, V., ch. vii.

²² *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664-1665, p. 198.

and Lee was unearthed. Their plan was to take houses near the Tower and Whitehall, and surprise those points as the prelude to a general rising.²³ Prompt action averted the danger, but the principals escaped, and the local officials everywhere were warned that the project was still on foot and were ordered to use all means to suppress it.²⁴ The capture of John Atkinson, "the stockinger" of Askrigg, much wanted for his share in the late plot, brought little result beyond the seizure of some revolutionary literature, nor was the capture of the collector-general of the sectaries, Knowles, of more value than in checking his own activities.²⁵ Hardly were these small successes achieved when warnings arrived from Scotland that Colonel Carr was recruiting there under a Dutch commission, and that Major-Generals Hepburn and Munro, General Leslie (Lord Newark) and others should be secured.²⁶ These, with other alarms, led to the disarming of suspected persons in western Scotland, the arrest of seamen thought to be corresponding with the Dutch, the issue of orders to local authorities to levy militia assessments and keep forces on foot, and the despatch of additional spies to Holland.²⁷

The issue depended, however, not on these disjointed designs of discontented sectaries but on the success of the fleet. The defeat of the Dutch in the battle of Lowestoft, on June 3, 1665, brought to an end for the time the hopes of those who had counted on an English naval disaster.²⁸ The administration was correspondingly elated, but their rejoicing was short-lived. On the heels of victory came the plague which by June had produced a reign of terror in London. The court and most of the clergy fled before it. In consequence Nonconformist ministers emerged from their hiding places, and resumed their sacred office. Conventicles increased and conspiracy again raised its head.²⁹ Early in the summer the authorities unearthed a design, known from the name

²³ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664-1665, pp. 259-263, 271; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, pp. 34-35; cf. also *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, Heathcote, pp. 146, 182; *id.*, *Various*, II. 121, 235, 246; also *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664-1665, pp. 169, 172.

²⁴ *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, pp. 34-37; *id.*, *Various*, II. 379; also *id.*, XIII. 4, p. 464; XIV. 4, p. 75; also *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664-1665, pp. 286-287.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-372 *passim*, for Atkinson. For Knowles, *ibid.*, pp. 330, 442, 466, 497; cf. also *id.*, 1663-1664, p. 292, and *id.*, 1661, p. 87.

²⁶ *Id.*, 1664-1665, pp. 344-431 *passim*; cf. also Willcock, *A Scots Earl*, pp. 138-139.

²⁷ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664-1665, pp. 363-392 *passim*, also pp. 314, 348; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, Heathcote, p. 191.

²⁸ Clarendon, *Life*, *Cont.*, par. 638 ff.; Pepys, June 13, etc.; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664-1665, pp. 407, 412, 437, 442.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 431-518 *passim*; Calamy, *Nonconformist Memorials*, ed. Palmer, I. 57; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, August, 1665, *passim*.

of its chief victim, as the Rathbone Plot, an old plan in a new, and, under the circumstances, a more dangerous form. It contemplated the capture of the Tower by men crossing the moat in boats and surprising the undefended walls. Governor Robinson and General Browne were to be killed, and, strange precursor of the later catastrophe, the City was to be fired. The date set for the attempt was the sacred day of the Cromwellians, September 3. The seizure of the Tower was to be accompanied by risings throughout the country, especially in the west, and in Scotland.³⁰ The steps taken by Albemarle indicate how serious he considered the danger. As early as June 28 all old soldiers were ordered from the City. Officials of the northern counties were warned to be on their guard and seize suspicious persons. Long lists of warrants were issued and hundreds of arrests made. In one month fifty-five prisoners were sent to Lincoln Castle alone. Troops were ordered up to assist the local authorities if necessary. The Duke of York, on his way to Hull to inspect the fortifications, requested blank commissions for use in an emergency, and secured the promise of Lord Fairfax to aid the King in case of disturbance. In Scotland many arrests were made, including the generals Hepburn, Munro and Montgomery. Portsmouth was secured against surprise, and in London Albemarle took extraordinary precautions. Conventicles were vigorously suppressed, forces were recruited, and a steady stream of prisoners passed before the duke for examination on their way to the Tower. Special pains were taken to guard that stronghold, and its officers were ordered, among other things, to have three ships' lading of arms and ammunition ready for instant use against the King's warning. The danger passed, though not without further alarms among which the seizure of twenty barrels of powder being carried to Malmesbury gave substance to the darkest suspicions. The design was sifted, the guilty determined and held, and the others released.³¹

With this Parliament came together at Oxford, fearful of the plague in London. It is not surprising that, in the midst of war, disturbed by such recent alarms, meeting in a strange place and under protection of troops, the few members who had ventured to come together followed the Chancellor's lead in urging reac-

³⁰ Macpherson, *Life of James II.*, Docts., 1665; Pepys, September 1, 1665; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 596; Ludlow, II. 489.

³¹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1664-1665, pp. 451-582 *passim*; *id.*, 1665-1666, pp. 2-550 *passim*; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports, Var.*, II. 120. Willcock, *A Scots Earl*, p. 139, adds Colonel Robert Halket and William Rolston to those arrested at this time.

tionary measures. Stimulated by the recent revelations they hurried through the so-called Five Mile Act by which Dissenting preachers and teachers were forbidden to come within five miles of a city or corporate town, save on a duly certified journey. Not content with this a bill imposing an oath of passive obedience on the whole nation was introduced and almost passed. Finally they voted to recall the English then in Dutch service under penalty of being declared guilty of high treason.³²

Meanwhile the alarms continued. On October 23 hurried orders had been sent to the eastern counties to call out the militia and secure the Isle of Ely from the "fanatics or other enemies", and two companies were sent to guard Yarmouth.³³ The Somerset forces were warned to seize the agitator, Colonel Bovett, and prevent a possible rising.³⁴ Throughout November and December arrests and examinations were stimulated by news of a plot set for January 1.³⁵ The chief difficulties appeared in the north and Scotland,³⁶ and were as much financial as religious, the receivers of hearth money reporting that they met many obstacles even from the justices of the peace in those districts.³⁷ On December 16-17 twelve persons were committed to York Castle and two days later the northern authorities were informed by Albemarle that a rising was projected in Lancashire and Cheshire by some persons lately home from Holland and were ordered to secure the disaffected. His commands were carried out and Lord Freschville who took some of the conspirators reported the design on December 24. It was petty enough. One John Wilson and his father-in-law, Bradshaw, who had been released by Buckingham from York Castle on promise of good conduct after the plot of 1663, had raised men and money in the northern counties. Wilson confessed, and though other prisoners denied complicity they were all punished. With this success, and some letters from Blood and Carr which indicated that those much-wanted plotters were seeking or pretending to seek accommodation with the government, the agitations of 1665 came to an end.³⁸

In many respects the year had gone well for the administration.

³² *Parl. Hist.*, IV. 317-332; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 691 ff.; Ludlow, II. 394.

³³ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, pp. 24-25.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁵ *Id.*, 1665, p. 277.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 72, 76; Willcock, *A Scots Earl*, p. 139.

³⁷ *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XIV. 4, p. 76.

³⁸ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, pp. 91-176 *passim*; cf. also *id.*, 1661-1662, p. 481; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports, Var.*, II. 121.

The Dutch had been defeated, the plots unravelled. But the domestic disaffection was not lessened and the plague had seriously crippled a principal source of supply. The new year began with a fresh series of alarms. In January Louis XIV. declared war against England, according to his agreement with the Dutch. A plan to kill Charles was reported and stringent measures taken to protect his person against assassination.³⁹ And late in the month orders were issued to the authorities of the coast counties to prepare against invasion and insurrection, which grew increasingly probable.⁴⁰ Early in February definite information of a design to seize Dover was transmitted to the government by one Schaick, a Dutch merchant there.⁴¹ Similar designs were reported from other places, notably Liverpool.⁴² Rumors of Richard Cromwell's participation in these new plans became so frequent that through his servant Mumford he took steps to deny them specifically to the Council, whom he petitioned to withdraw his name from the proclamation recalling English fugitives and permit him to live quietly in Paris under an assumed name, safe from creditors and conspirators alike.⁴³ Ludlow also resisted all entreaties to join the proposed expedition, though passports were issued to him and to Sidney in March to travel through France. Sidney, however, threw himself into the scheme, and appealed in person to Louis XIV. for 100,000 crowns to finance the expedition. Of that sum he was promised but a fifth, which was considered inadequate for the purpose. Meanwhile the proclamation recalling the fugitives appeared. Scott, Honeywood, Kelsey, White, Burton, Cole, Desborough, Spurway, Radden, Richardson, Grove and Phelps were summoned by name to render themselves before July 23 or be attainted of treason.⁴⁴ Two weeks later Colonel John Rathbone and seven other officers and soldiers were found guilty of the plot of the preceding September and presently executed.⁴⁵

This was the last considerable event in the contest until the meeting of the fleets,⁴⁶ on which, as in the preceding year, every-

³⁹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, p. 210, etc.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 207-214, 224-273 *passim*, especially January 25, pp. 2, 3, 4, February 12, etc.; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XIII. 4, p. 446; XV. 7, p. 101; Ludlow, II. 492.

⁴¹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, pp. 239, 409.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 243.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 189, 270, 281, 299; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, Ormonde, III. 209-210.

⁴⁴ Ludlow, II. 381, 386, 393-394, 396-397; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, pp. 318, 342; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, "Algernon Sidney".

⁴⁵ Pepys, March 23-April 6; Ludlow, II. 489.

⁴⁶ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, pp. 340-409 ff., for rumors.

thing hinged. On June 1 they met off the Dunes in a terrible four days' battle. Neither side was victorious, though Albemarle was saved from defeat only by the opportune arrival of Rupert. Under the circumstances even a drawn battle was felt to be a success for it prevented a Dutch landing and a possible rising.⁴⁷ The old duke's bull-dog courage was in fact criticized on precisely that ground. "It would have been better", said Carteret, "had he retreated earlier, rather than venture the loss of both fleet and crown, as he must have done had not the Prince arrived."⁴⁸ The result of the battle did not, as in the preceding year, restore quiet. A general feeling of uneasiness pervaded the country, and men began to be anxious about the stability of the government.⁴⁹ The City refused the King's request for a loan and monied men in the north were said to be, like those in London, anti-royalist and unwilling to lend to the crown.⁵⁰ These things, with the alarm of invasion, greatly disturbed the administration.⁵¹ Governors of forts and garrisons were ordered on June 26 to repair their fortifications, victual for two months and fill up their quota of soldiers. At the same time the lord lieutenants were instructed to make the militia ready against invasion, commissions were issued to nine persons, including Buckingham and Monmouth, to raise regiments of horse to be paid from the militia money.⁵² On the other hand it was reported that though some leaders promised a rising if troops were landed, the Dutch relied on their sailors rather than their soldiers, while Albemarle and Rupert both declared that the enemy would not land as they had no horse and their foot was only fit to man ships.⁵³ In any event nothing would be done till after the next battle. Nevertheless disaffection presented serious difficulties. Deal was even reported so "dismally affected" that it was not safe to quarter troops there.⁵⁴ Another plan was discovered to release Lambert,⁵⁵ and the desperadoes were said to be kept from rising only by dissensions among themselves and lack of money.⁵⁶ The government acted promptly on its information. Many London houses, including that of Lady Rolles, were searched for suspicious persons, papers and

⁴⁷ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, p. 422; Ludlow, II. 492.

⁴⁸ Pepys, June 11, 1666.

⁴⁹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, pp. 442-522 *passim*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 459.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 356, 376, 442, 469.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 461, 466, 475-476, 489; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports, Var.*, II. 122.

⁵³ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, pp. 469, 476, 485.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 477, 487-488.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 522.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 488, 521.

arms.⁵⁷ The design to release Lambert was thwarted and the governor of Guernsey was ordered to hang de Briselone, Sieur de Vancourt, the governor of the Isle of Chanzy, who had been captured in the attempt, together with the master of the ship in which it was proposed to carry off the general, and in case of invasion a significant blank was left in the instructions.⁵⁸ As the crisis approached a change came over the temper of the people. The lord lieutenants were warned on July 15 to be on their guard against disaffection and invasion, and if a landing was attempted to give no quarter.⁵⁹ On that same day the first fruits of the policy toward the refugees appeared, for, to the general surprise, Desborough arrived in England to submit to the proclamation.⁶⁰ Other signs were no less encouraging. In the face of actual invasion men laid aside their differences. The deputy lieutenants of York set an example for the rest of the kingdom by subscribing £2000 for defense.⁶¹ The Nonconformists were reported from many quarters as ready, even eager, to fight the Dutch and French though there were doubts as to whether it was wise to enlist them and "let them count their numbers".⁶² And though warnings of the most desperate designs were received from Westmoreland, though 1800 men were reported ready to rise in London and the King's life was declared to be in imminent danger, the success of all these plans rested on the fortunes of the fleet.⁶³ They were soon determined. On July 25 the Dutch and English met off Sheerness and the English were wholly successful. Two days later they made a descent on the coast of Holland burning some towns and destroying much shipping and merchandise.⁶⁴

The relief was great. The Council ordered thanksgivings to be offered for the victory, and every fourth man of the militia to be dismissed.⁶⁵ Immediate advantage was taken of the confusion and depression of the disaffected to gain the submission of the remaining refugees. The informer Grice who had revealed the Rathbone Plot was engaged to secure Blood, Jones, Palmer and

⁵⁷ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, pp. 477, 497.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 522; hanged October 3, *id.*, *Add.*, 1660-1670, p. 727.

⁵⁹ *Id.*, 1665-1666, p. 538.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 529, 544.

⁶¹ *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports, Var.*, II. 122-123.

⁶² *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, pp. 532-533, 587; *id.*, 1666, p. 3; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports, Var.*, II. 122-123; *id.* XII. 7, pp. 40-41, for alarms and plots; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1665-1666, p. 546, for Nonconformists.

⁶³ *Cf.* note 62.

⁶⁴ Scott, *Rupert*, p. 315; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Alexander who were said to have gone to Ireland to do mischief.⁶⁶ Custis again approached Dr. Richardson, and an agent was employed to gain over Colonel Scott.⁶⁷ This was a person otherwise known to fame as a novelist, the first if not the worst of her species, Mrs. Aphra Behn. Another lady who remained anonymous, perhaps from motives of delicacy, agreed, for a suitable reward, to play the part of Delilah in securing Ludlow.⁶⁸ From her and from hints thrown out by Richardson to Custis another design against the King's life, apparently through poison, and involving his fruiterer and confectioner, was revealed.⁶⁹ At the same time, acting on information from Mrs. Behn and others, the Council contrived an intrigue of its own against De Witt, in behalf of the Prince of Orange. This was devised with the aid of one Buat, formerly secretary in the office of Arlington, and now employed in a similar capacity in Holland. It was almost immediately discovered. Buat was seized, Tromp, his brother, and others connected with it were dismissed, and the plot collapsed.⁷⁰ The worthy Mrs. Behn, meanwhile, won over Scott, and learned from him of the dissensions among the exiles and their dissatisfaction with the Dutch.⁷¹

These activities were interrupted by the great fire which broke out in London on September 3 and laid a great part of the City in ashes. The damage it wrought was scarcely deeper or more widespread than the terror. The Papists, the French, the Dutch and the sectaries were variously charged with the catastrophe. The coincidence of the date with that set for the design of the year before was conclusive to many minds that it was the work of the insurrectionaries.⁷² It was expected they would take advantage of the situation, and the court, as usual, turned to Albemarle, then with the fleet, to save them. "The consequences by disorders likely to follow", wrote Arlington to Clifford, "are terrible." The King, with the unanimous concurrence of the Council, urged the duke's return, confident that "could he see the condition of things he would come, for he would have it in his hands to give the King his

⁶⁶ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666, p. 64; cf. also *id.*, 1665-1666, pp. 526-527.

⁶⁷ *Id.*, 1666, p. 44.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 72 ff.; Ludlow, II. 398; Pontalis, *John De Witt* (trans. Stevenson); *Secret Hist.*, II. 203 ff.

⁷¹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666, p. 82; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 835 ff.; some desperadoes taken, *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666, p. 91.

⁷² *Secret Hist.*, II. 231 ff.; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 887 ff.

kingdom a second time".⁷³ The appeal was effective. Albemarle left the fleet for London on September 6 and under his firm hand order emerged from chaos.⁷⁴ The anxiety of those in power was not lessened meanwhile by the information poured in upon them by the industrious Mrs. Behn. The design of Captain Woodman, Colonel Doleman and De Witt to blockade the Thames with sunken ships, Sidney's activities, news of the agitators, White, Sydrach Lester, the Quaker Turley, plans for a rising and details of proposed invasion alternated in her letters with news of dissensions within the States and between them and the French.⁷⁵ The alarms were not confined to the City, the Council and Mrs. Behn. The whole country was disturbed, and in many places, especially in the north, militia was called out and arrests made to ensure quiet.⁷⁶ To crown all there appeared on September 19 a declaration of war against Denmark, which had been added to the list of England's enemies by Dutch diplomacy.⁷⁷ But with all the excitement, the warnings and the catastrophe, no rising appeared. The conspirators had learned since 1663, if they had learned nothing else, that without foreign aid success was hopeless. The Dutch were in no condition to take the offensive, the French were half-hearted foes at best. Many of the chief agitators were in Ireland, and the disaffected in London were more crippled by the fire than the government they opposed.⁷⁸

When Parliament met on September 21, therefore, for the first time in the reign the speech from the throne contained no reference to plots. This was highly unsatisfactory to the Commons which felt that the origin of the fire had not been adequately investigated. They appointed a committee to secure information regarding priests and Jesuits and to probe the rumors of conspiracy. A bill for inspecting public accounts, and another against the importation of Irish cattle were passed at the instigation of Buckingham and Ashley over the Chancellor's protest, and an attempt was made to impeach Lord Mordaunt as a precedent for similar action against the Chancellor.⁷⁹ But men were less moved by these things than by the open quarrel between Clarendon and his rivals, the revelations of

⁷³ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666-1667, p. 99.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105; cf. also Pepys.

⁷⁵ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666, pp. 72-156 *passim*.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 128 ff.; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, p. 42.

⁷⁷ Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 824.

⁷⁸ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, Mrs. Behn's letters, September 25, and p. 156; Pontalis, *John De Witt*; cf. above note on Grice; Macpherson, *James II.*, I. 24.

⁷⁹ *Parl. Hist.*, IV. 332-363; *Secret Hist.*, II. 255 ff.; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 943 ff.

weakness and corruption, the increase of taxation in the face of great calamity, and the extravagance of the court. It was felt, even in Parliament, that this was no time to irritate the Dissenters and a bill to enforce the Corporation Act was defeated. At the same time, acting on reports and warnings from government agents and friends, spies were increased, proclamations were issued against the Catholics, arrests were multiplied and various places, notably Exeter Castle, were fortified.⁸⁰

These rumors culminated suddenly and unexpectedly. On November 15 a body of horse and foot marched into Dumfries and seized Sir James Turner who had been vigorously carrying out the government's policy of repression among the extreme Presbyterians of Galloway. Under command of a certain Captain Wallis they marched on Edinburgh where they expected a rising in their behalf. Their numbers increased to about 2000, and though they were joined by no persons of rank or quality, it was reported that they had a number of old officers among them. With the first alarm of the rising the discontented began to stir in England. From Yarmouth, Bristol and other centres of disaffection came the usual crop of rumors. Fifty or sixty horse appeared bound for Acton. Riots of seamen took place in London. The Catholics were reported to be refusing the oaths. The government took active steps to defend itself. The Catholics were ordered to disarm, the authorities of the northern counties were commanded to seize all suspicious persons, troops were sent north, and fifty foot were despatched to Leeds. But the danger, if not the alarm, was short-lived. The loyal Scotch nobility and gentry flocked to join the regular troops which were hurried forward to meet the rebels. Divisions appeared in the counsels of the rebel leaders and while they hesitated overwhelming forces gathered against them. On November 28 they were attacked and routed at Pentland Green. Many were killed, some 300 were captured, of whom ten were hanged at once and twenty more condemned to death later. In all 120 were punished for their share in the short-lived insurrection. Wallis alone of the leaders was taken. The rest escaped, it was said, to Ireland, whence many of them had come.⁸¹

⁸⁰ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666, pp. 167, 178-179, 206-287 *passim*; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XIV. 2, p. 301; *id.*, *Montague-Beaulieu*, p. 168; Pepys, October 30, November 9-10.

⁸¹ Best account, Terry, *Pentland Rising*. Cf. also *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666, pp. 272-365 *passim*; Carte, *Ormonde*, VII. 103; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, pp. 42-43; *id.*, XIV. 2, p. 203; *id.*, XIII. 467; Pepys, November 24, December 5 and 19; Willcock, *A Scots Earl*, pp. 140-145.

But the English government was winning Pyrrhic victories. Weakened by the plague, the fire and the war, the country began to resist the demand for more money. Hearth tax riots were reported from many places, and continued disturbances among the seamen kept Albemarle and the guards continually on the alert in London.⁸² Many fomenters of sedition were still at large, and the Dutch government was found to be planning another attempt at invasion.⁸³ The administration was near the end of its offensive resources and was glad to meet the Dutch proposals for negotiations. Steps were accordingly taken to send plenipotentiaries to Breda in the spring of 1667 to arrange a peace. In the midst of its satisfaction at the conclusion of hostilities, however, the country was startled by an extraordinary incident. On May 3 a warrant was issued for the arrest of the Duke of Buckingham on a charge of treason. His steward, Henry North, had already been seized, and an inquiry was on foot to determine his relations and those of his master with conspirators like Mason and Greathead. Having eluded the officer sent to arrest him, the duke was proclaimed on March 8 for holding secret correspondence, resisting a messenger and evading summons. He was deprived of all his offices, and several of those with whom he was known to have been associated were arrested, notably an astrologer, Heydon, from whom it was hoped to secure testimony. Many examinations were held and considerable evidence obtained of the duke's connection with the fanatics and of his dealings with Heydon. Warrants were issued for Blood and eleven others, and the prisoners in the Tower and York Castle were closely interrogated.⁸⁴

To many this whole business seemed an attempt of Clarendon, or worse enemies of Buckingham, to put him out of the way. Others, not less well-informed, declared the matter deeper than it appeared. The duke had had dealings with the Commonwealth men before the Restoration. His stewards were men of that party, and his lenience after the Farnley Wood Plot was often remarked. Spies set on his track gave damaging evidence against him, which was supplemented by the testimony of Braithwaite. Among other indiscretions he had employed Heydon to cast the King's horoscope, an offense still punishable with death. It is not necessary to believe that informers had been employed by Southampton and Buckhurst

⁸² *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666, pp. 321-322, 330, 349; Pepys, December 19.

⁸³ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666, p. 427.

⁸⁴ *Id.*, 1666-1667, pp. 512, 533, 552-553, 560; *id.*, 1666, pp. 449, 460, 463, 530-531, 537, 555; *id.*, 1667, pp. 26, 37, 44, 71; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, VII. 12, 45. Cf. also, for general and favorable account, Lady Burghclere, *George Villiers*, pp. 176-177.

—incredible combination—to concoct a case against him, nor to lay much stress on the Heydon incident to believe that Buckingham, among other questionable activities, continued his connection not only with Nonconformists in general, but with some members of its extreme wing. Nor is it surprising that a Council, aware of this and fearful of its results in this critical situation, took steps to protect itself. It is doubtless true also that personal rivalry played its part.⁸⁵

Concurrently with the Buckingham incident the Council, relying on its diplomacy and its guard-ships, had decided not to equip a fleet in this spring of 1667. But hardly had the negotiations at Breda begun when the Dutch fleet under de Ruyter, carrying 4000 troops under Colonel Doleman, put to sea. On June 10 it was in the Thames. The fort at Sheerness and the ships at Chatham were destroyed and London itself threatened. After three days of terror they stood out to sea again and harassed the coasts. The Council meanwhile called out train-bands and militia, ordered local authorities to maintain the peace, began a levy of 10,000 foot and 2500 horse, and summoned Parliament. Above all it made every effort to get money. The Chancellor was asked to get it from the lawyers, the Archbishop of Canterbury from the clergy, the lord lieutenants from any one who had it. The very militia then being embodied were appealed to. The Dutch did not leave without a blow. On July 3, with 1200 men under Doleman, they made a vigorous attack on Landguard Fort opposite Harwich. Other attempts were made on Plymouth, Portsmouth and Torbay. In every place they were beaten off. On July 26 peace was signed at Breda. Its terms reflected the results of the raid, and justified De Witt's sagacity in organizing it. But "the drooping brethren who pricked up their ears" at the Dutch attack as well as those who "followed the noble Doleman" fulfilled Bampffield's prophecy that they would come home "like the king of France and his forty thousand men". That they had some hopes of internal disturbances there is much reason to believe. Their instructions noted that the officers of the fleet were to approach the people of Sheppey with offers of free worship, and to conciliate such as were discontented with the English government. Had the negotiations failed, had the attack on Landguard succeeded, the story might have been differ-

⁸⁵ Pepys, March 3, 1667; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, VII. 12, 45; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666-1667, pp. 44, 71; *id.*, 1666, p. 511; *cf.* also *Carte MSS.*, fol. 35, p. 302, quoted by Lady Burghclere, p. 71; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 1119 ff. See also *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1667, pp. 30-31, and warrants, *id.*, 1666, p. 537. and offer to testify, p. 587.

ent.⁸⁶ As it was the effect on politics was profound. Its first result was the brief and agitated meeting of Parliament on July 25.⁸⁷ Its second was the acceleration of the fall of Clarendon, who was deprived of the great seal on August 30.⁸⁸ Before that came, however, a desperate and successful attempt to rescue the old conspirator, Mason, who was being taken from the Tower to York Castle with the spy Leving, was made at Darrington in Yorkshire by the desperadoes, Blood, Lockyer and Butler. Leving escaped their attempt to kill him and was carried to York. There he was found a little later dead in his cell, poisoned, it was said, by his enemies.⁸⁹

With these events we come again to the Duke of Buckingham who was in some measure concerned in both. He had surrendered on June 27 and was sent to the Tower, whence he wrote a submissive letter to the King. Three days later he was examined by a committee of the Council. The case against him fell flat. The chief witnesses and the informers, Middleton and Grice, had mysteriously and providentially died, the two latter not without suspicion of poison. Only Leving remained and he was out of the way by August 5. The duke therefore met the charges against him with jaunty contempt. He was remanded to the Tower but powerful influences were at work in his behalf and he was released on July 14, in time to take an active part in the Chancellor's downfall.⁹⁰

With that a new alignment of ministerial forces was begun, whose basis was Nonconformity. That party had long been recovering its position in the boroughs, in the Council, and in royal favor. Its leaders promised a cessation of persecution and corruption to a nation weary of both. In the new arrangement there was but one man in England with the peculiar qualifications for heading an

⁸⁶ Account of Dutch attack largely from Hague Rijksarchief, Admiraliteit, 1038, 1896, XCV. 53, fol. 80 ff. Cf. also Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 1025, 1089 ff.; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666-1667, pp. 73, 130, also June 1-10 *passim*, pp. 189, 200-291 *passim*; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 5, pp. 7, 9, 12, 49; *id.*, *Var.*, II. 6, 12, 26, 124-125, 381; *id.*, XIV. 8, p. 368; Pepys, July 3, 1667, and elsewhere June; *Secret Hist.*, II. 302 ff.; also in connection with attack on Landguard, cf. petition from garrison, May 14, 1663 (*Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XV. 2, p. 301), for pay; also examinations in Parliament later, *Grey's Debates, passim*.

⁸⁷ *Parl. Hist.*, IV. 363-366, 437. Indignation even in the King's presence, *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1666-1667, p. 309.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, July-September, *passim*; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 1134-1147.

⁸⁹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1667, pp. 310, 326, 331, 360, 427; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, p. 51.

⁹⁰ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1667, pp. 179-294 *passim*; Foxcroft, *Halifax*, I. 51; Burghclere, *Villiers*, pp. 179 ff.; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, par. 1130 ff.; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XIV. 9, pp. 367-368.

alliance of court and dissent. The persistent foe of Clarendon, the champion of toleration, the master of the royal revels, Buckingham had allies everywhere, courtiers, Presbyterians and republicans. Two months after his release his dignities had been restored to him and he was on the road to power. By December he was recognized as the chief minister of state. This was not due wholly to Charles's love for the duke nor to the influence of the latter's family and friends. Men often commended themselves to the King by sharing his pleasures, but, whatever he was, the King was no fool, he did not choose his ministers on that ground. Buckingham came to the head of affairs because he could bring a party to support the King. With him four others, none of them Anglicans, joined to form the so-called Cabal. The change was unaccompanied by a general election, and was obscured by the very means taken to effect it. But it none the less expressed a national crisis, and it is not the only time that a seeming court intrigue masks a great political change. It indicated that the Nonconformists were to have their turn.⁹¹ The ministerial revolution was accompanied by corresponding events in Commons and Council. It was reported in September that a bill was contemplated repealing the Act of Uniformity and modifying episcopacy. Suggestions were offered for Council action against Catholics, and a declaration "leaving some little dawn of hope open to dissenting Protestants, which the King would be glad to find".⁹² Council orders against the Catholics were in fact issued September 11, and many in the army resigned or were dismissed in consequence.⁹³ Laws against Dissenters were meanwhile enforced laxly or not at all. Steps were taken to reverse the Clarendonian policy of political imprisonment, and an order issued for a return of all prisoners in England, their names, the date of the warrant, and the cause of commitment.⁹⁴ Many, including the old Commonwealth men, Major Wildman, and Colonels Salmon, Creed and Bremen were released.⁹⁵ These measures were interrupted by the proceedings relative to the impeachment, banishing and disenabling

⁹¹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1668, pp. 258-589; *id.*, 1664-1665, p. 150; *id.*, 1667-1668, pp. 55, 145; *id.*, 1668-1669, pp. 420-421, 466, 616; Pepys, December 21, 1667; Calamy, *Nonconformist Memorials*, ed. Palmer, pp. 57 ff.; Clarendon, *Life, Cont., passim*; Lady Burghclere, as above; Foxcroft, *Halifax*, I. 55, 64; Rapin, III. 885; also *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1667, p. 89; *id.*, 1667-1668, p. 259.

⁹² *Id.*, 1667, pp. 437, 447.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 457; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, p. 53 (the 10th); *id.*, *Var.*, II. 382 (order not signed by Duke of York); *cf.* also *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1667-1668, pp. 54, 110.

⁹⁴ *Id.*, 1667, pp. 454 ff.; *id.*, 1667-1668, *Introd.*, XXII. 165-266 *passim*; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, pp. 54, 58; *id.*, *Var.*, I. 149-150.

⁹⁵ Macpherson, *James II.*, *Docts.*; Pepys, December 7, 1667.

of Clarendon in Parliament between October and December. When the Houses met after the Christmas recess the late Chancellor was a fugitive and his opponents were directing affairs.⁹⁶

In their hands financial reform, a new foreign policy and religious toleration replaced the Clarendonian system. The formation of the Triple Alliance in January, 1668, to check the aggression of Louis XIV. and the promise of an early reorganization of the finances satisfied the Anglicans who remained in control of the Commons. But they were not pleased with the striking change in religious affairs which accompanied these measures. Persecution languished and informers starved, justices declared they no longer were encouraged to repress dissent.⁹⁷ Conventicles multiplied and silenced ministers returned to public preaching. In some cases the Nonconformists even retaliated on Conformist clergy.⁹⁸ But this was exceptional; in the main a great calm succeeded the storms of preceding years. Nor was this wholly due to the neglect of the informers or the plotters. If new informers were not encouraged the old ones were abundantly rewarded, and such plotters as remained were as diligently pursued as ever.⁹⁹ But the policy now adopted destroyed the basis of conspiracy, and the revolutionaries were driven to other employment. Some remained in Dutch service, some, like Doleman, sought employment further afield. The refugees remained in Switzerland, in France and in the Low Countries undisturbed. Of the English revolutionaries many had by this time reaped the reward of their actions; the informers had been paid or had died. Some of the desperadoes like Blood and his son, Mason, Lockyer and Butler were still at large. A few of these like Mason returned to pursuits of peace. Some, like Paul Hobson, had been deported to the colonies. Others were driven to the trade of highwaymen. And if it had not been for three circumstances in the ensuing six years the history of the conspirators like their attempts to overthrow the government might well end here.

The first of these was the result of the administration policy on the Parliamentary situation. There it found little favor. The session which began on February 10 was filled with bitter reflections on court, ministers and even the King himself, with the investigation

⁹⁶ *Secret Hist.*, II. 336; Clarendon, *Life, Cont.*, II. par. 443; *Parl. Hist.*, IV. 336 ff.; *Journals H. L.*, XII. 141 ff.; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1667-1668, p. 32.

⁹⁷ Cf. especially Calamy's *Nonconformist Memorials*, *passim*. For Scotland, *Secret Hist.*, I. 234 ff. Extraordinary decrease of information in the *Cal. St. P. Dom.*

⁹⁸ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1667-1668, pp. 68, 69, 94, 165 ff., 404; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports, Var.*, I. 151-152.

⁹⁹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1668, p. 461; *id.*, 1670, p. 174, etc.

of the miscarriages of the war, and with the re-enactment of the Conventicle Act now about to expire. This now passed both Houses and only the King's refusal to sign it prevented its becoming law.¹⁰⁰ On August 11 the old act expired and practical toleration ensued.¹⁰¹ It was accompanied by other measures emphasizing the new course. Sir James Turner was dismissed on the ground that his harshness had caused the Pentland Rising.¹⁰² Hundreds of prisoners were discharged. As Penn had prophesied the King connived at meetings and lectures.¹⁰³ Buckingham was said to consult Wildman daily, and it was even proposed to make him a member of the new commission of accounts.¹⁰⁴ So great was the revival of conventicles and the activity of Dissenters in politics¹⁰⁵ that the Council issued a proclamation against them as a prelude to the new session of Parliament which began in October.¹⁰⁶ It repeated the career of its predecessor, but with more success, for Sir George Carteret, treasurer of the navy, was impeached. Its attempt to re-enact the Conventicle Act, however, was again foiled by the King's refusal to sign the bill, and it was not until the next session which began in the following February that the Houses were able to force this measure on the King.¹⁰⁷

With its signature Nonconformist disturbances broke out at once. Its enforcement began in May, George Fox being one of the first victims. The struggle commenced in London, each side recognizing that if conventicles could be suppressed there they would be elsewhere. The contest was obstinate and bitter in the extreme. Officers and soldiers engaged in putting down the meetings were obstructed and threatened, informers and constables overawed. The little conventicles were easily disposed of, but three or four thousand persons defended the doors of the three great Presbyterian meeting-houses, and it was a serious question as to whether the

¹⁰⁰ *Parl. Hist.*; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XIII. 2, p. 147; Pepys, April 30, 1668; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1670, p. 13.

¹⁰¹ As above, and *id.*, 1668, p. 268.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 270, 276; "Bellenden" (*i. e.*, Sir William Ballantyne) was also dismissed, *cf.* Willcock, *A Scots Earl*, p. 158.

¹⁰³ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1667, pp. 94, 145; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, pp. 58, 68; Pepys, May 3, August 11, 1668.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, November 4, 1668.

¹⁰⁵ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1668, pp. 320-419 *passim*; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, p. 63.

¹⁰⁶ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1668, p. 449; *cf.* also *ibid.*, pp. 420-616 *passim*, and *id.*, 1670, pp. 17, 25, etc. For disturbances, see also *id.*, 1667-1668, pp. 270, 282, 437, 454; Pepys, March 25, July 18, 1668.

¹⁰⁷ *Parl. Hist.*, IV. 441 ff.

guards should be called out.¹⁰⁸ The situation was difficult. If the law was to be enforced trouble was sure to follow, if not the law would be brought into contempt. Many men agreed with Secretary Trevor that the matter was "very unhappily and unnecessarily brought to trial".¹⁰⁹ Many arrests were made. Major-General Butler and several Fifth Monarchy men were seized and old officers and soldiers ordered to leave the City for six months.¹¹⁰ Guards were set, two aldermen sent to Newgate, spies employed and the artillery investigated for fanatics.¹¹¹ On June 11 two companies of soldiers took possession of the meeting-houses, and were later relieved by four more with orders to pull down the seats and pulpits, in which work of disfurnishing the eminent talents of the King's surveyor, Mr. Christopher Wren, were presently required.¹¹² As the local authorities joined in the resistance the situation increased in gravity. Robinson reported that he had broken up two meetings and got two preachers but neither the constables, headborough, nor justices of the Tower Hamlets would come near him.¹¹³ Nor did persecution stop the meetings. When the life guards and foot secured the meeting-houses the people assembled in the streets, defended their preachers from the officers, aided them to escape and fought with the troops.¹¹⁴ Similar scenes were enacted in almost every town in England. Every obstacle was put in the way of the authorities who attempted to enforce the act. Goods distrained for conventicle fines found no purchasers, counter charges were brought against those engaged in suppressing the meetings, and bitter hostility was roused on every hand.¹¹⁵ By September the increase of seditious literature led to the reappointment of L'Estrange as licenser.¹¹⁶ And when, in that month the City refused the King a loan of 60,000 pounds the matter took on a new aspect.¹¹⁷

It has indeed been questioned whether this whole episode was not an administration device to prove to the Anglicans the difficulty of enforcing their policy, and to the Nonconformists that they must look to the crown alone for relief.¹¹⁸ At all events the resistance

¹⁰⁸ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1670, pp. 208 ff.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-317 *passim*.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 243, 267, 276; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, p. 71.

¹¹² *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1670, pp. 243, 267, 276.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240, 343-344, 424. Cf. also *Nonconformist Memorials*, I. 239, "Vincent", etc.

¹¹⁵ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1670, pp. 27-519 *passim*.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 368-369, also pp. 201-521 *passim*, and especially p. 502; *id.*, 1672, pp. 20-21, 46-47.

¹¹⁷ *Id.*, 1670, p. 502.

¹¹⁸ Davies, *Life of Baxter*, p. 340; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1670, p. 255.

of the Dissenters was in so far successful that enforcement of the act was gradually relaxed toward the end of 1670.¹¹⁹ For this, however, events outside the domestic situation were also responsible. In the month that the disturbances began Charles had signed the secret treaty of Dover, and arranged for a joint attack of France and England on Holland, a design presently incorporated in an open treaty negotiated by Buckingham who was kept in ignorance of the original with its secret clause providing for French troops and subsidy in aid of Charles when he declared himself a Catholic.

Such was the first series of circumstances which disturbed the peace of the Cabal. The second was a sequence of events which began in the winter of 1670 and which seemed to bear little relation to politics. On December 6 the Duke of Ormonde returning from a City dinner in honor of the Prince of Orange was set upon by highwaymen and saved from their extraordinary project of hanging him at Tyburn only by the opportune arrival of his household.¹²⁰ This with the attack of the Duke of Monmouth's bravos on Sir John Coventry occupied much of Parliament's time after the Christmas recess of 1670. They produced three results, the passage of a bill against malicious maiming and wounding, the issue of a proclamation against Thomas Hunt, Richard Halliwell and Thomas Allen for the attack on Ormonde, and Lord Ossory's warning to Buckingham in the King's presence that if another attempt was made on his father's life he would kill Buckingham "though he stood behind the King's chair". Even these exciting events were overshadowed by the extraordinary attempt made on May 5 to carry off the royal regalia from the Tower by means of a remarkably shrewd plot only foiled by accident. Its designers, a pseudo-clergyman, his nephew and a friend were seized. To the surprise of all the clergyman was found to be the old outlaw Blood, the nephew his son, the friend an Anabaptist silk-dyer, Parret.¹²¹ Blood, refusing to answer any inquiries save before the King, was procured that privilege through the influence of Buckingham. There he admitted his complicity in a long series of exploits from the Dublin Plot of 1663 to the attempt on Ormonde. It was not unnaturally supposed that he would be hanged, but, to the astonishment of all, he and his son were released

¹¹⁹ Burnet says simply that the King *ordered it*. Trevor (*Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1670, p. 233) "feared for the consequences to the government if a tumult was begun and blood drawn". When the City refused the loan, the money was advanced by certain Dissenters. This may account for the relaxation.

¹²⁰ Carte, *Ormonde*, VII. 103-104, 109; *Journals H. L.*, January-March, 1671.

¹²¹ *Somers Tracts*, VIII. 439 ff.; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, "Blood". The dyer's name is also found Perrot.

and pardoned early in August, and Parret was freed a little later. In September a pardon was issued to another of Blood's desperado associates, Alexander, and the climax was reached when the King conferred on Blood a pension of £500 a year in Irish lands besides restoring his other property which had been forfeited for treason in 1663.¹²²

It is no wonder that the case of "Colonel" Blood puzzled men then and since. The usual explanation given for his treatment is the impression he made on the King by his wit and courage, and the threat that his death would be avenged by the band to which he belonged. This is doubtless true. But other circumstances indicate this is not the whole truth. On June 22 while he was still in prison warrants were issued to search various houses in London for Richard Cromwell.¹²³ A week later three of Cromwell's captains were taken on Blood's information.¹²⁴ On July 2 a number of desperate men were arrested and alarm given of a projected attempt on the Tower. Twenty-six of these men were sent to Newgate, and four to the Tower.¹²⁵ On July 18 twenty-seven of these desperadoes were tried and convicted.¹²⁶ The most important result was to come. On September 21 after Blood was duly pardoned and rewarded there began a long series of interviews between him and Secretary Williamson concerning the status, the allies and the wishes of the Nonconformists, especially those in and about London.¹²⁷

Blood had in short "come in". It was peculiarly fortunate for him that his crime and capture had come at a peculiarly opportune moment else with all his audacity he could not well have escaped death. The administration in fact was in need of just such a man, and the outlaw was much more useful to them alive than dead. The ministry, divided between a Catholic and a Protestant section, was bent on a Dutch war which each party urged for its own ends. But it was confronted by two great questions, the Dissenters and the debts. A foreign war in the face of these was not to be thought of. "If it is bad now", Williamson wrote of the late disturbances over the Conventicle Act, "what would it be at a critical time?"¹²⁸ And the combined invasion and insurrection at which he hinted was even more dreaded now than formerly. The decline

¹²² *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, August-September, 1671 *passim*.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

¹²⁴ *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports, Fleming*, II. 19; *id.*, XII. 5, p. 19.

¹²⁵ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1671, p. 356.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 385-386.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 496-497, 553-554, 556, 560-563, 568-569, 581; *id.*, 1671-1672, pp. 1, 8-9, 14, 27-28, 63.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

of blind loyalty even among the royalists, the growing suspicions of the King's French and Catholic policy, and, not least, the death of the Duke of Albemarle, had weakened the position of the crown. Some guarantees of peace at home must therefore be had before war was begun abroad. Negotiations were consequently entered upon during these closing months of 1671 between the court and the Nonconformists, and throughout the ensuing winter representatives of the court, Williamson, Arlington, the King himself, consulted with leading Dissenters, or negotiated through men like Blood and Butler and Ennys, to find a basis of reconciliation.¹²⁹ In the last days of 1671 a decision was reached in regard to both money and Nonconformity and was immediately put into execution. On January 2, 1672, orders were issued to pay no more money out of the Exchequer.¹³⁰ By this drastic measure the administration secured enough cash to carry out its warlike plans, though at the cost of panic, bankruptcy and loss of credit in the City. On that same day the second part of the design was set in motion. Pardons were issued to Thomas Blood, jr., Robert Parret, Ralph Alexander, Nicholas Lockyer, John Barnes and John Hicks. On the next day a pass to England was issued to Colonel John Desborough. Three weeks later a similar pass was issued to Colonel Kelsey to go to Holland for his wife and goods, and Colonel Berry was released from Scarborough Castle. It was reported on February 1 that Burton, Kelsey and others were on their way to Holland to move their families and possessions back to England. That same day pardons were issued to Kelsey, Captain Nicholas and John Sweetman, and by the middle of March Major Scott, now in English service, was sent to Holland for intelligence.¹³¹ "Certainly", wrote Sir F. Burgoyne, "some designs must be on foot that such are received."¹³² Those designs were soon apparent.¹³³

With most of the desperadoes and exiles won over or put out of the way, with sufficient ready money to begin the war, it remained only to secure the main body of Nonconformists. As a result of the long secret conferences in the winter of 1671-1672 that matter was now taking definite shape. It tended more and more to a licensing system. On February 19 Butler summed up the situation. Time must be given to secure licenses, he said, and where no public

¹²⁹ As above.

¹³⁰ Some exceptions, *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1672, p. 89.

¹³¹ *Id.*, 1671-1672, pp. 65, 98, 116.

¹³² *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, VII. 334.

¹³³ Cf. also Ludlow, II. 393; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1671-1672, p. 13, etc.; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, VI. 368; VII. 464.

meeting-house existed a private house should be allowed until a public place could be had. Licenses should be issued to persons as well as places, and for preaching in private families on thanksgivings and like occasions. Quakers and Fifth Monarchy men of wild principles should be connived at, and license-getting made easy. Thus all depended on the King. And if, he added, speedy justice could be had in lawsuits, it would be beyond the power of "the devil and bad men" to harm the sovereign.¹³⁴ Such were the bases of the plan agreed upon. On March 15, 1672, appeared the second Declaration of Indulgence. By its provisions the Church of England was to remain unchanged, but penal laws against Nonconformists and Recusants were to be suspended. Places were to be licensed for meeting of Dissenters and Recusants, except Papists, and seditious preaching and opposition to the Church was to be suppressed.¹³⁵ At the same time the Council was reorganized by the addition of new men, Halifax, Essex, Fauconberg, Bridgwater, Worcester, Henry Coventry and presently Williamson and Osborne. Few of its original members remained and it became strongly Protestant. With such preparations and the French subsidy the administration felt ready for war which was begun two days before the issue of the Declaration by a treacherous attack on the Dutch Smyrna fleet in the Channel, and declared two days after the Indulgence appeared.

So far as internal disturbance was concerned the ministerial plans were justified by the event. The beginning of the second Dutch war differed from that of the first in no respect more than this, there were no accompanying plots, no fear of fire in the rear. As in the former war the English found difficulty in commanding the services of their own seamen, whose employment by the Dutch was not wholly prevented. Steps were taken to seize those sailors who had fled inland or oversea to escape impressment, and proclamations were issued promising pardon and reward to all who had fled from the King's displeasure. These were sent to Holland and the Dutch counter-proclamations seized. In this, in securing information from Holland, and obtaining news of the war, the services of men like Blood were largely employed.¹³⁶ But his energies like

¹³⁴ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1671, pp. 203, 217; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports, Var.*, II. 383.

¹³⁵ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1671-1672, pp. 116, 204, 226, 232, 243, and March 29, 1672; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, pp. 90, 93-94; cf. Bate, *Declaration of Indulgence of 1672*, published too recently to be used for this article.

¹³⁶ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1671-1672, pp. 295-296, 343, 372, 589; *id.*, 1672, pp. 73, 76, 102, 105, 198, 595, etc. For seamen, cf. *id.*, 1671-1672, pp. 241-247, 277, and all through March, 1672; also *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XIII. 4, p. 468; XIV. 2, p. 326.

those of many others were meanwhile taken up with the licensing of conventicles which rapidly assumed surprising proportions.¹³⁷ It was said that Churchmen would attack the Declaration in the courts, but licensing was not disturbed as the Anglicans decided to wait for a meeting of Parliament when their cause was certain to be in friendly hands. That pleasure was denied them for the time. Unwilling to face the Houses the King prorogued the session called for April 1 to October, then to February, 1673.¹³⁸ To emphasize the new policy honors were conferred upon the ministers, and the granting of pardons went on rapidly. The extent of such clemency may be inferred from the release of 480 Quakers in May alone.

The war was meanwhile well under way. The French had poured their troops across the Dutch frontiers, and the English had sent their fleet to sea. On May 28 they met their enemies in the fierce but indecisive encounter of Southwold Bay. By land the French were more successful, and at the end of June it seemed that Holland was doomed. But the dykes were cut and Amsterdam saved. In July William of Orange became Stadholder of Holland and Zeeland, and, after the murder of the Pensionary De Witt in August, he took entire charge of Dutch affairs. To many Englishmen this reviving power of Holland was grateful. Even the Council was divided on the policy of pursuing the war, and opposition to what seemed the French and Catholic designs of the court spread throughout the country despite the efforts of the administration. It became evident that the ministry would be attacked in Parliament on its foreign as well as its religious and financial policy, and efforts were made to avert the blow. An embassy was sent to negotiate with William, a bold attempt was made to seize thirty-six seats which had become vacant, and the day before the Houses met the issue of licenses was suspended. It is interesting to observe that although this policy had been in existence less than eleven months nearly 1500 licenses had been issued.¹³⁹

Ministerial apprehensions of Parliament were more than justified. The Commons met the bold defense of the stop of the exchequer and the declaration made by the King and Shaftesbury by forcing the withdrawal of the thirty-six members, and sending an address to the King declaring that penal statutes in matters ecclesiastical could not be suspended save by act of Parliament. At the same time a bill for the ease of Protestant dissenters was intro-

¹³⁷ Cf. *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1673, Introd.

¹³⁸ *Parl. Hist.*, IV. 561-585; *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1672, p. 396.

¹³⁹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, May and June, 1672, *passim*, especially pp. 160-161, 319-320, June 12, order against coffee-houses, and false news, also pp. 226-227. For embassy, Foxcroft, *Halifax*.

duced. This allowed meetings to be held in places appointed by the act and in others licensed by the King under the act. They defeated a proposal to exclude Protestant dissenters from the House, and finally passed the great Test Act which made it impossible for Catholics to hold either civil or military office.¹⁴⁰ With that act and the events of the ensuing summer the long struggle here recorded reached a climax. The fear of dissent was replaced by the fear of Catholicism. The royal attempt to unite Catholic and Protestant dissent to balance against the Anglicans and secure Catholic toleration collapsed. The Duke of York and Clifford were driven from the Council which thenceforth became wholly Protestant. Though the bill for the ease of Protestant dissenters failed of enactment, Nonconformists were no longer persecuted, and gained a sort of toleration on sufferance. Justices were reprov'd for enforcing the laws against them, and the King in Council ordered his portion of the conventicle fines to be remitted. None the less they were still subjected to annoyance by their enemies, and disaffection in the extreme wing of the party especially against anything that savored of Catholicism was not wholly destroyed.¹⁴¹

The war meanwhile went on but both nations were weary of it and steps were taken toward the end of 1673 to make peace. They were accompanied, perhaps accelerated, by an obscure intrigue with which this story may fitly close. A certain du Moulines, once Arlington's secretary, now holding a like post under the Prince of Orange, began correspondence with certain members of the English ministry, once the Protestant, now the peace party, with whom he had previous acquaintance. They were determined to force the King to break his connection with France and make peace with Holland. They even contemplated the possibility of an appearance of the Dutch fleet in the Thames and a concurrent rising in England if the King proved obdurate. The court however learned of the negotiation and seized one of du Moulin's agents, William, Lord Howard of Escrick, already noted in connection with the disaffected party. He was sent to the Tower and there confessed. Among others he implicated Shaftesbury. There was no other direct evidence against him, however, and all Charles's efforts failed to win from the prince any information regarding his allies, friends and correspondents in England.¹⁴² But the incident is none the less important. With it

¹⁴⁰ *Parl. Hist.*, IV. 501-585.

¹⁴¹ *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1672, pp. 309, 372; *id.*, 1673, p. 369; *cf.* also letter of Sir T. Player, *id.*, 1671, p. 368; *Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports*, XII. 7, p. 101.

¹⁴² *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1672, p. 302; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, "William Howard"; Temple, *Memoirs* (1757), II. 286-287, 294, 334, 336-337; Burnet, book III., 1674 (2 *ref.*); D'Avaux, *Memoirs*, I. 8. Burnet knew Temple's account, but adds details of his own. *Cf.* also Lingard (*History of England*, IX. 254), who accepts,

there emerges that alliance between Shaftesbury, the Nonconformists, the disaffected, and William of Orange which was of such importance later. Shaftesbury presently gave this point by arming his household ostensibly against the Papists, and later seeking refuge in the City with an Anabaptist preacher. Thence he was ordered to his estates in the country by the King, and shortly before the session of 1674 deprived of his offices.¹⁴³ When that session began he was the leader of the opposition, and with this a new chapter in affairs began.

The party which had found a spokesman in Bristol and a minister in Buckingham, now, driven from power, secured a leader in Shaftesbury, who united against the Anglican minister, Danby, the elements of national discontent, the Parliamentary opposition, and Protestant nonconformity. In this larger body, the Country Party, later the Whigs, the group we have here discussed was, for the most part, absorbed. The issues for which they had striven were modified in the presence of greater interests. The fate of Shaftesbury, his followers and his successors, belongs to another chapter of English history. But in that struggle some of the men we have described played a part. Lord Howard of Escrick again appeared in the ignoble character of informer, contributing to the fate of his kinsman, Strafford, as well as to that of Algernon Sidney, who, with Lord Russell, found an end of all his strivings on the scaffold.¹⁴⁴ Others played less conspicuous though perhaps not less important parts in the later tragedies. Blood, indeed, was dead before the agitation over the Exclusion Bill and the ensuing disturbances, which would have given his peculiar talents such an excellent field, took place. But when the Earl of Argyle fled from Scotland in 1681, in the first stage of his wanderings that ended in his rebellion, he found refuge first among the conventiclors of northern England and was guided thence to London by Blood's relative and companion in arms and conspiracies, Captain Lockyer.¹⁴⁵ The Thomas Walcott, against whom Fitzgerald gave evidence in 1670-1671, was executed for a share in the Rye House Plot. When Monmouth led his ill-fated forces in his last throw for the crown it was the "turbulent

and Christie (*Life of Shaftesbury*, II. 197-198, and note), who rejects, the story. The connection between Shaftesbury and this party, like that of Buckingham, is, and must be, obscure. But it seems to me wholly probable. It is difficult to agree with those who see in it anything inconsistent with Shaftesbury's character or career. Restoration standards, circumstances and methods were not like our own, and it serves no good purpose to Bowdlerize them.

¹⁴³ Macpherson, *State Papers*, I. 74; Christie, *Shaftesbury*, II. 197-198; cf. also *Cal. St. P. Dom.*, 1671, pp. 562-563.

¹⁴⁴ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

¹⁴⁵ Willcock, *A Scots Earl*, p. 293.

town of Taunton" that gave them the warmest reception and paid the heaviest price for its devotion to that hopeless cause.¹⁴⁶ In all of those events, in Argyle's rebellion, among the men who followed Shaftesbury to Oxford, in the plots against Charles, the Monmouth rebellion and the invasion of William, were found survivors of these earlier activities. When Titus Oates and Israel Tonge sought material for their monstrous fabrication of the Popish Plot it was in the stories of these early revolutionary movements they found no small part of the detail which lent verisimilitude to their information. Conceived in the same spirit, and in not dissimilar terms they raised the Popish Terror on the same foundations that had previously supported the Nonconformist Terror. Shaftesbury and his followers thus found ready to their hands the same weapon so long and so effectively used against them, and sensible of its value from their own experience, they seized it eagerly, wielding it against their opponents as vigorously and successfully as it had once been used against them. Even in the plots that brought Essex to suicide and Sidney and Russell to the scaffold we find the persistent story of the Council of Six, meeting at the Green Ribbon Club in the King's Head Tavern,¹⁴⁷ a mystic number at least as old in the history of conspiracy as Tonge and his Council of Six which met at the Wheat-sheaf twenty years before. Thus, though many of the old revolutionaries had passed away before those stirring times, those who remained acted generally in accordance with their older character. Above all, the party and tradition on which they depended formed not the least powerful element in those great agitations. Such a study as this must, of necessity, be more or less obscure and unsatisfactory. But without some account of an element whose aims changed in expression but not in strength or direction between the beginning and the end of the Restoration period, no picture of that time can be complete. Above all, such a study may help to restore that sense of continuity between revolution and revolution which has so long been lacking, to the great detriment of a proper understanding of that period.¹⁴⁸

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¹⁴⁶ Macaulay, *History of England*, I. 510, note, 520; cf. also Fea, *King Monmouth*.

¹⁴⁷ Pollock, *Popish Plot*, pp. 237, 334.

¹⁴⁸ It has not been possible to insert in this article the great amount of material on the subject existing in manuscript in the Journals of the Privy Council in the Public Record Office in London. The information there given would add much to the details of this account but would hardly affect the general conclusions. It is hoped that such parts of this as are not covered here may be included in a later study. Owing to an oversight references to the Dublin Plot from the *Calendars of State Papers, Ireland*, were unfortunately omitted in the first part of this study which appeared in this REVIEW for April. Such references will be found under the appropriate dates in the volume for 1663-1665, pp. 100-265 *passim*.